GUIDE TO AOA PROGRAMS

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I. NEW DIRECTIONS IN AGING NETWORK

The 1978 amendments to the Older Americans Act refocused the mission of the Administration on Aging (AoA), stressing four themes:

The first is the continuing main thrust of AoA in helping the States develop systems of community-based services for older persons.

The second theme is the AoA role in developmental social experiments which bring research, training and demonstration resources to bear on specific social problems.

The third emphasis is on AoA's interdepartmental role, endeavoring to change the behavior of other Federal agencies that have responsibility to serve older people.

The fourth mission strongly emphasized in the 1978 amendments is advocacy. AoA is responsible for representing the interests of older people within the Federal government, and the State and area agencies are to serve as advocates for the elderly in their respective jurisdictions.

These four converging themes of AoA's activities lead to an overall goal which can be expressed in simple terms: AoA helps older people live autonomous, useful, constructive lives for as long as possible in their own homes and communities.

To accomplish this goal, AoA brings together actions and ideas generated by a broad network of individuals and private and public organizations concerned with the aging population.

The AoA headquarters in Washington reaches through 10 Regional Offices on Aging across the nation to 57 State agencies on aging (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands).

At the community level the network includes nearly 600 area agencies and more than a thousand nutrition projects. The area agencies work with private and public providers to assure services to older people.

Systems of Community-based Services

Title III of the Older Americans Act authorizes AoA to encourage and assist State and local agencies to develop comprehensive and coordinated service systems which will:

- Help older persons secure and maintain maximum independence and dignity in a home environment,
- Remove barriers to independence for older persons, and
- Provide a continuum of care for the vulnerable elderly.

This title authorizes grants for AoA's major service programs--social services, congregate and home delivered nutrition services, and the development and operation of multipurpose senior centers.

About 155 million meals were served under these programs in fiscal year 1979. About 31 million of the meals (20 percent) were home delivered.

Approximately 64 percent of the nutrition program participants were low-income persons and 23 percent minority, during FY 1979.

Eleven million persons received AoA-supported social services through the aging network in fiscal 1979. Information and Referral topped the list of services, serving about 2.8 million persons. About 2.2 million persons received transportation services and 1.6 received outreach services. Other services by order of volume delivered were: home social and health services, legal and related counseling, escort services, and home repair and renovation.

Developmental Social Experiments

Two of the landmark aging achievements of the early 1970's were shaped significantly by AoA-sponsored experiments in service delivery. Today's nutrition programs grew out of AoA demonstration projects and their staffs were formed with assistance of AoA training programs. Area agencies on aging were first tested in AoA demonstrations and their personnel were built up with the help of AoA-sponsored training.

Now AoA is concentrating its developmental social experiment efforts on long-term care and other areas vital to the future of America's growing number of elderly persons.

Interdepartmental Coordination

AoA's interagency role, in which it coordinates and evaluates Federal programs for the elderly, now operates on the basis of 33 agreements AoA has made with other Federal agencies. Through these agreements, programs of Federal agencies are oriented to the needs of the elderly. AoA funds are invested in joint projects to accomplish the aims of the agreements.

Current examples of the interagency role are:

- In long-term care, AoA and other agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services are combining their funds and expertise under the HHS Long-Term Care Task Force. Two major focuses of the Task Force are the National Long-Term Care Demonstration Program and the development of Long-Term Care Gerontology Centers. Among the goals set for these programs are the discovery of ways to improve coordination of services for disabled older persons, limit unnecessary use of acute care and nursing home facilities and meet present and future manpower needs for delivery of long-term care.
- In rural housing, 10 model sheltered housing facilities for rural elderly are being developed jointly by the Farmers Home Administration of the Department of Agriculture and AoA.
- In the environment area, retirees are monitoring pollution standards for the Environmental Protection Agency as a result of an EPA-AoA agreement. Working half-time, the participants are proving very reliable.

Advocacy

Congress has given AoA, the States, and the area agencies on aging an overall advocacy mandate to serve as visible and effective advocates and spokesmen for the elderly in their jurisdictions. Each level of government is called upon to streng-

then and protect them from exploitation and abuse.

To implement this role,

- AoA has established five Bi-Regional Advocacy Assistance Support Centers to back up State and area agencies in their advocacy efforts.
- AoA has issued regulations requiring each State and area agency to expand legal services and to establish a nursing home ombudsman program.
- It has funded the American Bar Association's Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly which is joining in the attack against age discrimination and is promoting free legal service for low-income elderly persons through State and local bar associations.
- AoA has joined with the U. S. Civil Rights Commission, the Legal Services Corporation, the American Bar Association's Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, ACTION, and the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services in a joint Task Force to study age discrimination and ways to deal with it.

Title VI Indian Programs

AoA developed regulations for Title VI and made its first direct grants to Indian tribes in 1980 for social and nutrition services for older Indians. Grants of $6 million were made to 85 tribes and programs of technical assistance are under way

to help the 85 grantees implement them. Under the new Title VI, added to the Older Americans Act in 1978, Indian tribes can apply directly to AoA for grants or continue to go to the States for funds under Title III to operate social and nutrition services.

II. GRANT PROGRAMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

AoA's Title IV discretionary funds programs cover issues related to:

- Services to the vulnerable elderly
- Services to prevent physical and mental deterioration and foster self-sufficiency
- Promotion of effective advocacy
- Improvement of management

Research and Demonstration Projects

The Research, Demonstration and Evaluation programs of AoA develop knowledge and generate information which can be used in aging policy, planning and practice. Activities supported include systematic statistical studies, development projects which convert knowledge or information into usable tools and instruments, field testing of innovative ideas, and promotion of proven models.

The Research program supports projects which contribute to the well-being of the elderly by:

- Identifying and studying current patterns and factors

that affect the lives of older persons,

- Developing, demonstrating and evaluating approaches and methods for improving the life circumstances of older persons, and
- Developing and disseminating useful materials for utilizaticn by older people, service providers and policy makers.

The program gives particular attention to the needs of very old and impaired persons whose problems are aggravated by social isolation, low income, rural residence and minority status.

The Model Projects and Demonstrations Program supports projects which enhance the scope and quality of service provided older persons and show better ways of promoting the well-being of older persons. The program seeks to test and demonstrate new mechanisms, systems and approaches for providing and delivering services and determining the need for services. It also seeks to improve the quality of social services, the coordination of services, the exchange of information on improved approaches, and the use of model project findings. To qualify for AoA support, proposed projects should relate directly to needs of older people nationwide, be based on prior research or significant experience, and show potential for success.

The Evaluation program supports contracts for assessment of performance in AoA-sponsored programs and other programs concerned with older people. They have included evaluations

of area agency operations, nutrition programs, legal services and other Title III operations. Some of the projects are sponsored jointly with other Federal agencies.

Education and Training

The Commissioner on Aging develops a national manpower policy for the field of aging which reflects present and future needs for personnel in all programs serving the elderly. The manpower policy, required by the 1978 amendments, is implemented through training and education programs under Title IV of the Older Americans Act.

Professional Careers in Aging

AoA supports training programs at institutions of higher education to assist students in acquiring knowledge and skills needed to serve the elderly.

Under its Gerontology Career Preparation Program, AoA funds projects at baccalaureate, masters and doctorate levels to prepare students for employment or advancement in career areas immediately related to carrying out of the Older Americans Act programs, such as:

- Policy formulation, planning and management.
- Supervision or practice in case management or services management or services management.
- Administration or practice in providing social, health and related services to the aging.
- Administration or practice in services to special pop-

ulations such as minority elderly, rural elderly, urban elderly or developmentally disabled older people.

In 1979, AoA made 79 grants awards to colleges, universities and other institutions to carry out the objectives of the Gerontology Career Preparation Program. Lists of institutions funded by AoA are available from the Office of Education and Training. Some financial assistance is available to students through the colleges.

State Education and Training

Another major area of AoA education and training effort is the aging network. AoA works through the State agencies on aging to build up the on-the-job skills and knowledge of staff of State and area agencies on aging and the personnel of community-based service providers. For example, a State may train the staff of a new area agency to be sure they can perform effectively, or it may take key program personnel from dozens of nutrition projects throughout the State and upgrade the skills they need to handle problems older people bring to nutrition sites.

National Continuing Education

AoA's in-service and continuing education programs focus on personnel in health related areas, home service, social sciences and many other fields, developing education materials and redesigning curricula to keep abreast of current and future needs of older people.

Dissertation Program

The AoA Dissertation Program provides one-year grants to universities to support dissertation research by doctoral students in social gerontology and related areas. The purpose of the program is to contribute to knowledge in aging, while at the same time attracting professionals in a wide range of disciplines into research and career roles in aging. Typically, AoA awards about 30 grants a year to universities on behalf of doctoral candidates. Universities are strongly encouraged to apply on behalf of minority students.

Multidisciplinary Centers of Gerontology

Support for gerontology centers of special emphasis was a new AoA direction in 1979. The centers are focal points for carrying out integrated programs of multidisciplinary training and practice, basic and applied research and technical assistance. Each contains a complex of professional and academic components appropriate to its special subject area.

Top priority has been given to long-term care gerontology centers which focus on health and social service systems for the chronically disabled elderly. Twenty-two awards were made to support the planning and development of such centers in 1979. In 1980, five of these centers received grants to advance into operational stage, and other institutions continued developmental activities. The program also supports centers with other subject emphases of major significance to older people such

as income maintenance, older women, employment, retirement, and housing.

FOR YOUR COPY OF GRANT GUIDELINES:

New guidelines for Research and Demonstration grants will soon be published. To receive a copy upon publication, send your request to the Office of Research, Demonstrations and Evaluation, Administration on Aging, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D. C. 20201.

To receive a copy of the next Education and Training Grant Guidelines (1981), send your request to the Office of Education and Training, Administration on Aging, same address as above.

Please send separate requests if you wish to receive both sets of guidelines.

SCAN

The bibliographic data base within the National Clearinghouse on Aging is known as SCAN, for Service Center for Aging Information. The nationwide system is designed to provide an extensive file of literature to fulfill the information needs of the gerontological community--administrators, practitioners, researchers and the elderly.

An additional contract for development and operation of the central control facility of SCAN was awarded in 1978, and two additional contracts have been made for the collection, in-

dexing and abstracting of documents, developing new bibliographies and providing services from the data base.

The system is now partially operational, and the following products and services are available:

- Custom searches of an interim bibliographic data base on gerontology.
- Referral services directing users to appropriate sources of information.
- Distribution of about 180 sets of microfiche to repository libraries.

III. KEY CONTACTS

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